

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L HARARE 001398

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR J. FRAZER
LONDON FOR C. GURNEY
PARIS FOR C. NEARY
NAIROBI FOR T. PFLAUMER
DS/OP/AF
DAKAR AND PRETORIA FOR A/S KANSTEINER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/31/2013
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: RIOT POLICE BREAK UP SMALL DEMONSTRATION, HARARE
MAYOR RELEASED

REF: A. HARARE 1381
[1](#)B. HARARE 863

Classified By: Political Officer Audu Besmer for reasons 1.5 b/d

Summary:

[1](#)1. (C) On July 8 police stopped about 15 to 20 MDC members who attempted to march from Africa Unity Square in downtown Harare to the US Embassy to deliver a petition. While the Daily News reported the number of demonstrators to be about 3000, reports from witnesses put the number at 15 - 20.

[1](#)2. (U) On July 8, Harare Executive Mayor Elias Mudzuri was re-arrested, held in a Harare Central Police Station cell for seven hours and released without charge. End Summary.

Non-Demonstration

[1](#)3. (C) On July 8 about 15 to 20 MDC members attempted to march from Africa Unity Square in downtown Harare to the US Embassy to deliver a petition criticizing South African President Thabo Mbeki for lack of progress in resolving the Zimbabwe crisis, and calling on the USG to pressure the GOZ to agree to dialogue with the MDC. Riot police broke up the march before it started by beating and arresting several would-be marchers. According to march organizer Dennis Murerwa, special assistant to MDC National Chairman Isaac Matongo, the march was an MDC-organized mass action event primarily done for publicity, rather than to deliver the petition to the US Embassy. Murerwa said the MDC leadership sanctioned plans for ongoing mass actions, however may not have been aware of specific plans for this march. The Embassy was not contacted, and has not yet received the petition, but Murerwa promised to deliver it to Poloff on July 9.

[1](#)4. (SBU) A Daily News article on July 9 reported that about 3000 demonstrators marched through the streets of downtown Harare carrying placards criticizing Mbeki and attempted to gather at Africa Unity Square. RSO and RSOfsn spoke with a street vendor in Africa Unity Square on July 8 who reported that only about 15 - 20 demonstrators were involved. A different source also reported to the Ambassador that the number gathered was more like 15 - 20.

Harare Mayor Released

[1](#)5. (U) On July 8, Harare Executive Mayor Elias Mudzuri was re-arrested, held in a Harare Central Police Station cell for seven hours and released without charge. According to a report in the Daily News, and Mudzuri's lawyer Beatrice Mtetwa, Mudzuri intends to go to his office on July 9 for the third consecutive day to face arrest. Minister of Local Government, Ignatius Chombo suspended the mayor in April 2003 for alleged misconduct. Mudzuri, the MDC, and the Combined Harare Residents Association claimed the suspension was illegal, and the matter is pending in court (Refs A and B).

Comment:

[1](#)6. (C) The blatant discrepancy between the number of demonstrators who actually showed up, and the number reported in the Daily News does nothing for the credibility of that paper in reporting on charged political events. End Comment.
SULLIVAN